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Brief résumé of establishment of honors program, covering: Selection of students, operation, requirements, grades and credits, degrees, honors, standards, development, costs, advising, physical facilities, and responsibilities of honors committee.

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HONORS PROGRAM IN THE COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE

Legislation approved by the Letters & Science Faculty (underlined portion).

1. General.

There shall be established within the College of Letters and Science (1) an Honors program for the education of our best students, and (2) provision for the recognition of this education, when satisfactorily completed, as an achievement of unusual distinction by such students. The program shall not be allowed to impair the present educational opportunities of the remaining great majority of the student body, and shall not be implemented unless the necessary additional budgetary provisions for the time required on the part of the faculty shall be made. The initiation and administration of the program shall be the responsibility of a committee to be known as "The College of Letters and Science Committee on Honors Programs for Superior Students," (referred to hereinafter by the brief title, "Honors Committee") to be constituted as follows: six faculty members, of whom three shall be appointed by the Dean of the College (these to include one member from the Office of the Dean) and three elected (on staggered three-year terms so that a new member would be elected each year). The rotation of elected members shall not begin, however, until the program has been in effect one full year. From among the six faculty members the Dean of the College shall appoint a chairman, each year, for whose contribution of time full budgetary provision shall be made. This Honors Committee shall work in cooperation with the Dean of the College and the administrative committees of the departments - within the limits of the enacted legislation of the College. If legislation of the University Faculty, or approval of the President or Regents of the University, shall be needed to make any part of this legislation effective, it shall be sought by the Dean of the College.

2. Selection of Students.

Participating students, to be known as Honors candidates, shall be selected from the upper 5% to 10% of the undergraduates in the College. Students may apply for entry to the program on their own initiative and may be recommended for it by any faculty member. Students may be selected for Honors status for any semester of their undergraduate careers (but their achievements shall be recognized only as detailed in Section 5 of this legislation). Policies and practices of selection shall be worked out by the Honors Committee with whatever cooperation the individual departments are willing and able to give. The addition and withdrawal of students (whether voluntarily or on the recommendation of the Honors Committee) shall occur only between semesters. The Honors Committee shall develop procedures for such changes of status in cooperation with the departments and, when possible, shall codify them and present them to this faculty for approval.

3. The Honors Program.

a. The Honors Committee shall develop, in cooperation with the individual departments, procedures by which the selectod Honors candidates may conduct a substantial part of their studies with significantly improved depth and challenge, with more individual guidance by faculty members, and yet with increasing degrees of individual freedom and responsibility, particularly in their last two years.

b. In courses open to freshmen and sophomores the Honors Committee shall ask individual departments to develop special procedures for superior students (where they do not already exist). These shall be available to those Honors candidates who are recommended by the Honors Committee and who are acceptable to the individual departments for such advanced or intensive work in a particular subject. (It is

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assumed that individual departments may wish to make such opportunities available to superior students in a given subject, if they can be identified, whether they are Honors candidates or not; there need be no segregation of Honors candidates in such circumstances. Perhaps in many, if not most, of the larger elementary courses this will involve special lecture, discussion or laboratory sections to which superior students in that subject would be assigned or invited and to which the Honors candidates would be directed except where a department rules adversely on a given student or in cases of unresolvable schedule conflicts. In other courses, large or small, where special "graded" sections appear unworkable or undesirable, the departments and the Honors Committee can doubtless work out satisfactory substitutes. In some cases the Honors Committee may recommend to departments that special tutorial or other individual guidance be given to Honors candidates who could not otherwise participate broadly enough in Honors procedures. Such faculty time as would be required thereby would be fully budgeted.)

c. When Honors candidates have enrolled as majors in a particular department, the department shall provide adequate opportunities for them under the principles indicated in paragraph "a" above. (In many, if not most, departments various special opportunities already exist for superior students majoring therein; these can be strengthened and extended and new procedures added. Unquestionably most departments have students who excel in their particular field, but whose excellence is not of sufficient breadth to qualify them as Honors candidates. The Honors candidates should be grouped with these other superior students in any present or future special procedures within individual departments.

Such opportunities should involve a considerable measure of independent work under professorial guidance, and much flexibility in credits, hours, etc., as recommended by the individual departments. More use could be made of courses now numbered 80, 180, the earning of credit by examination, the increase of credits in a course from, say, 2 or 3 to 5 or 6, etc.) A senior thesis, or its equivalent, for six credits or more, shall be required of all candidates for Honors degrees. (Whenever the number of superior major students in a given field, including any Honors candidates, allows, the departments should be encouraged by the Honors Committee to develop special seminars, colloquia, etc. - if these are not already in existence - to enrich the students' programs.

It should be noted that the association of graduate students with undergraduates in 100-level courses, and the possibility of admitting advanced undergraduates to graduate courses and seminars, offer unusual opportunities for more advanced and intensive work by Honors candidates. Opening to Honors candidates the separate discussion (or other) sections for graduate students in 100-level courses offers one such opportunity which would be available with minimum additional expense or disruption of present programs.)

d. When Honors candidates who are majors in one department take work in another department, they shall have the opportunity to participate in Honors procedures in the other department provided such department is both willing and able to furnish it. (Thus, a Physics major who is an Honors candidate and also a superior mathematician, would be encouraged to participate in honors procedures in Mathematics if the Mathematics Department found it possible to make the opportunity available.)

e. It is impossible to foresee all contingencies and it probably would be unwise to direct or bind the Honors Committee or the departments with more specific legislation at this time. Hence (any eventualities not provided for in the above regulations shall be taken care of through negotiations undertaken with the departments by the Honors Committee. In the case of disagreement between the Honors Committee and a department, the Executive Committee of the College shall be the arbiter.

4. Grades and Credits.

(Because procedures suggested for the education of Honors candidates will differ in varying degree from those for the general student body,) the Honors Committee shall consult with departments on the matters of grades and credits. (The students involved would ordinarily be expected to earn "A" or "B" grades. They should not be penalized because they have been given more intensive and demanding work to do. The fact that ten or more of such students working together in one class or section show a variation in achievement should not lead, either, to the application of standard "curves". At the same time, the problems involved in awarding no grades at all seem insuperable and, if low grades are deserved, they should be given; the Honors Committee will need such evidence for decisions as to the continuation of students in the program.)

If grades are emphasized, however, competition among different opportunities for the gifted students might lead to shopping for easier grades, which is a possibly common, and certainly unfortunate, practice among the general student body. The Honors Committee shall therefore give special attention to this problem) and advise the individual departments and instructors in whose hands (of course,) all ultimate decisions as to grades must remain.

In the work of their last two years Honors candidates shall be allowed as much freedom as possible to pursue individual work or to expand on the work of particular courses or seminars, for which appropriate arrangements as to credits shall be made. Nevertheless each Honors candidate shall continue to meet the total credit requirements of his major and the College for his degree.

5. Degrees, Honors and Standards.

Students who, at the end of their sophomore year, are in good standing as Honors candidates and have successfully completed at least 20 credits of work under Honors procedures, including at least three credits in Humanities, three in Social Studies and three in Physical or Biological Sciences, and who are recommended by the Honors Committee, shall be awardod Sophomore Honors. (This will make it possible to recognize appropriately superior work by students not proceeding to further study in the College of Letters and Science.)

Students who have completed the requirements for a degree in the College, and who have successfully completed at least 40 credits of work under Honors procedures (at least 25 credits of which shall have been earned in the junior and senior years, and at least 10 credits of the total 40 shall have been earned in departments other than the department of the major - with appropriate exceptions to be made for interdepartmental majors and in the case of unforseen problems encountered in the early years of the program) and who shall be recommended by the Honors Committee, shall be awarded one of the degrees: B.A. (Hons.), or B.S. (Hons.). (This will make it possible for transfer students, who enter at the beginning of their junior year to earn Honors degrees.)

Apart from any other consideration, to qualify for an Honors degree a student must have the recommendation of the department of his major, and have been an Honors candidate for both his junior and senior years.

All students who have participated in Honors procedures shall have all grades earned (or all courses taken) under such procedures given a special designation on their transcripts and all transcripts shall indicate that there are such special Honors

procedures and Honors degrees. (Making clear the extent of any student's participation in Honors' work will, we believe, have an importance similar to that of the grade-point average.)

Existing general College sophomore and senior honors shall be considered to have been replaced by the above and shall be discontinued after this program is fully implemented. (This should encourage broad participation in the Honors program by superior students.) Nevertheless it is recognized that students other than Honors candidates will display excellence in a particular subject (in which, indeed, they may have followed Honors procedures) and the provisions for the granting of honors in the major, and thesis honors, for such other superior students shall be as fully implemented and as much strengthened as possible. (The development of Honors sections and other Honors procedures, to which superior students in any subject who are not Honors candidates may be admitted, should serve to encourage and strengthen scholarly interests and standards of performance in the student body far beyond the ranks of the actual Honors candidates. Indeed the Honors Committee and the departments should make every endeavor to use the Honors Program as a vehicle for the general improvement of standards within the College.

Although the earning of Sophomore Honors, or indeed any specific amount of Honors work in the freshman and sophomore years, is not required for an Honors degree, the maximum possible participation in the program in those two years will facilitate the earning of the degree and should provide the best preparation for the Honors work of the last two years.)

6. Development of the Program.

The Honors Committee shall be constituted as soon as possible after this legislation is passed. During the year 1959-60 it shall seek further to develop special sections and other procedures for superior students where this is financially possible, to consult with departments as to programs, problems and costs (see section 7 below) and to prepare for the introduction of the Honors program for freshmen and sophomores in the academic year 1960-61. The full program leading to the Honors degrees shall be in effect by the academic year 1961-62. However, if the Honors Committee shall determine, for any year, that insufficient funds are available to operate a satisfactory program, it shall report to this Faculty and ask for advice.

7. Costs of the Program.

(The major costs of the program will be in faculty time and will thus involve additions to staff in most departments. We believe that we should guard against additional encroachment on the time the faculty devotes to scholarly activity. We also feel that only the recommended Honors Committee, between the times of its appointment and the preparation of budgets for 1960-61 can make a realistic estimate of what these costs shall be. Therefore, beginning with the budgets for 1960-61) each department shall include in its own departmental budget as submitted to the Dean all additional costs (chiefly in faculty time) foreseen as necessary to carry out the program. It shall also submit such estimates of additional costs to the Honors Committee which, in turn, shall assemble such estimates for the whole College, add to them whatever costs it foresees for its own operations, and present to the Dean an estimate of total costs for that year. It shall verify that all faculty time required is fully budgeted (and if, in any year, including the initial year of operation, it deems the funds available inadequate for the program it shall recommend any necessary actions to the College Faculty as provided for in section 7).

8. Advising.

The Dean shall designate a special group of advisors for the Freshman and Sophomore Honors candidates; the details of the advising procedure for such students shall be left to the discretion of the Honors Committee.

For Junior and Senior Honors candidates (whose advisors will, of course, be within the departments of the major,) the individual departments shall designate the most appropriate member or members to advise such students. (It is highly doubtful that all senior staff members would prove equally suitable in such a role) and departments shall be urged to make their selections with particular care. (The program's success may rest as much upon those advisors as on the Honors Committee itself.)

9. Physical Facilities.

(In cooperation with the Dean of the College,) the Honors Committee shall seek appropriate housing for its activities including offices for the chairman and such stenographic and other office help as will be required, rooms for advising and consultation and such other facilities as the Committee shall find necessary to discharge its functions. The Committee shall also consult with the University Librarian and the University Library Committee as to any appropriate use of library facilities for the special purposes of the Honors program. (Increased and more effective use of existing library facilities (or new facilities to be established) are suggested as vital elements of the Honors program.

There are two dangers which the Honors Committee is advised to guard against. On the one hand, by too lavish provision of physical facilities, there is the danger of creating an obvious elite which might well encourage intellectual snobbery. On the other, there is the perhaps even greater danger that unless some special reading, lounge, and seminar rooms are available to the gifted group, a valuable opportunity to encourage their mutual stimulation and exchange of ideas and experience will be lost.)

10. Responsibilities of the Honors Committee.

Subject to the provisions of this legislation the Honors Committee shall supervise the program for the selected Honors candidates, and shall report once a year (in the second semester) to the College Faculty, making any recommendations for action it considers necessary.

(The range of possibilities open to development by the Honors Committee is broad and includes dozens of suggestions made to the committee which is recommending this legislation. Among these is the suggestion that the students in the program, in any semester or year, should have one broad interdisciplinary course, of the Freshman Forum or Contemporary Trends type, in which all of them would participate as a group. It shall be the duty of the Honors Committee to consider any such possibilities and proposals, and to make recommendations for additions or changes in the program to the College Faculty in its annual reports. In the beginning, however, it would appear that the problems of getting under way the minimum program here suggested will tax its skills and imaginations to the utmost.)